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Title : Regarding contunation of the MPLAD Scheme Projects.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Sir, today it has appeared in *The Pioneer*, "Scrap MPLADS move gets momentum". In *The Economic Times*, the following news item has appeared:

"BJP, RJD, CPM, RSP and TDP in favour of axing plan but Congress opposes it."

I belong to the BJP but I do not know how the media came to know that the Party as a whole has opposed the continuation of the MPLAD Scheme. Yesterday, the hon. Members belonging to the RJD from Bihar also raised the matter and they wanted that this Scheme should be scrapped. The Members from Bihar are saying all the time that it should be scrapped. But, on behalf of the overwhelming majority of this House cutting across Party-lines, I dare say that this is the best Scheme ever envisaged by the Government of India....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You need not help him. He will help himself.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : It is because I can proudly say that whatever work I have done during the last eight years through MPLAD Scheme, I am proud of that. I can show it to anybody that I have done such an excellent work through this Scheme. Some television channels have showed that some Members have taken bribe for sanctioning works under the MPLAD Scheme. But does it mean that everybody in this House is a bribe taker?

MR. SPEAKER: Certainly, it cannot mean that.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : It is said that because the MPs are taking bribe for sanctioning projects, it should be scrapped. That should not be the idea. If that be so, since some of the Members of this House have taken money to put questions, should we scrap the Question Hour also? Can we say that the Question Hour is also not required.

Sir, you go through the guidelines of MPLAD Scheme. Except making proposal to the District Magistrate or the Collector, the MP has got nothing to do. The estimate is prepared by the Executive, the work order is issued by the Executive, check measurements are done by the Executive and payment is made by the Executive. So, except making proposal, we do not have anything to do. I would also say that without the collusion of the District Administration no MP can indulge in corrupt practices with regard to the MPLAD Scheme.

We have gone through the newspapers. It says that you have convened a meeting of the Leaders of all the Parties.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not refer to it. I have not called any formal meeting.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, I am just discussing about it. The Leaders do not require MPLAD Scheme to win their elections. They have got the charisma and they can get the projects sanctioned from any of the Ministries. It is only the poor Members like us who require the MPLAD Scheme to win elections. Some of the MPs have got abundant money. They can spend money. But do you mean to say that we are incapable of even putting a tube-well or an electric pole? So, I want to say that if you at all want to scrap, it then have a full scale discussion on the MPLAD Scheme in this House. If you so desire, you can hold a symposium outside. You can convene the Members of the media andâ€¦* who oppose it.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not take down the names.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : We will also talk to them. We will also convince them that it is absolutely required. My appeal to you is that no action should be taken unilaterally. If any action is to be taken at all, it should be taken in this House in consultation with the Members of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, let there be no confusion on this matter. I want to make the position clear. Firstly, the Chair has nothing to do with the introduction or the continuance or non-continuance of the Scheme. It was a Scheme by the Executive and it is entirely for the Executive whether they do it and how they do it. It is not for me, as the Speaker.

Secondly, long before any allegation or misappropriation or misconduct of any hon. Member of Parliament had even been alleged, I had been saying in my personal capacity from the time it was introduced that it will interfere with the District planning[r24].

I do not ask you to agree with that. That is my personal view. I have mentioned that long before any such disclosure happened. I am not saying that the disclosure is correct. I am not in a position even to say whether these allegations against any hon. Member are correct or not correct. That is why a Committee is looking into it with all sincerity and seriousness. Therefore, please do not say that as a Speaker I am trying to manoeuvre something to do it. That is not correct at all. I do not want to say here as to why I have called an informal meeting because it

has been done at the request of some hon. Member of Parliament whose identity I do not wish to disclose here and you may not like it also.

* Not Recorded.

Therefore, let us not go into it. I am sure, the Government of the day will consider as to what is to be done in the matter. On the matter of whether they consult the leaders or will not consult the leaders, I have nothing to say. When my views will be asked for, I will give my views.

There will be no luncheon recess today.